



Eye catching cars, decorated with the Styx name and logo, were offered to students in a competition organised by Swedish Match UK.

The Styx boxes distributed to students contained a reference to a website (<http://www.styxpapers.com>) clearly aimed at a youth audience, but with no manufacturer details. The website included details of recruitment opportunities last December, for students to give out free samples. But the promotion was not limited to cyberspace—eye catching Smart cars, highly popular among young people, and conspicuously decorated with the Styx name and logo, were being driven and parked in areas frequented by students. Even the most basic Smart car retails for around £6800 (US\$12 500) in the UK, some 31 000 times the price of a pack of Styx papers.

Research showed that the Styxpapers website was registered to Swedish Match UK Limited. During 2004, it recruited students to participate in a competition by distributing packets of cigarette rolling paper in their spare time. Applicants were promised training in sales techniques, a Smart car, and a competitive salary. “So sticky, it’s criminal” was one of the slogans, apparently trying to mimic teenage slang. Swedish Match was not mentioned; in fact, Styx is not made by the company, but is being sold, together with filter tips, on a trial basis in the UK. The packaging, in different colours, resembles chewing gum packs.

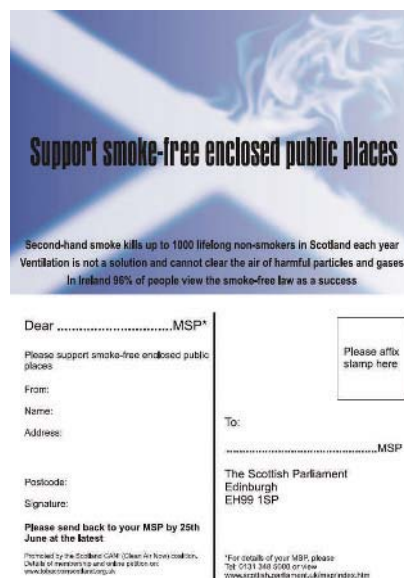
Challenged on its home ground by Swedish health advocates, Swedish Match said it had not been aware of the website: its overseas operations are decentralised with each division having a high degree of independence. However, websites must be approved by central management, which had not happened in this case. The company agreed that the UK website was inappropriate, and promised to discuss it with the UK division, who would probably shut it down. Since then, the site has consisted solely of the familiar announcement that it is under construction.

In a recent survey by GES Investment Services in Stockholm, Swedish Match ranked low in comparison with 12 other leading international tobacco companies

on the question of how well its policies comply with the prohibitions on marketing and sales to minors contained in the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Perhaps it is just less organised, and less crafty about trying to wear the “corporate social responsibility” cloak. Or perhaps the Styx campaign merely demonstrates the apparently incurable addiction of tobacco marketing executives to trying to catch yet another generation of young people.

Canada: the case of the unexpected website

For some years now, health organisations in several countries have been using creative internet strategies to counter tobacco promotions. One technique is to set up a health oriented website with a very similar name to a tobacco industry site involved in cigarette promotion aimed at internet savvy young people. The key feature of the health site is to give the lie to what the industry site is really all about. For example, in 2002, when BAT was caught out for the second time trying to encourage young people to attend venues where it sold and promoted its cigarettes by using a site called www.citygobo.com, Action on Smoking and Health UK (ASH) set up www.citygobo2.com, which left visitors in no doubt at all about what BAT was up to



UK: Scotland prepares for smoke-free vote A postcard developed by CAN!, a coalition group campaigning for “cleaner air now”, for people in Scotland to use to lobby members of the Scottish parliament to support a bill to make all workplaces smoke-free, along the lines of the pioneering legislation in Ireland.



Joe Chemo, a satirical character used in demonstrations against tobacco promotion before Canada’s total ban, being wheeled to a tobacco sponsored fireworks display in Vancouver. This sort of story and image regularly appeared on the benensonandhedges.org website.

(see BAT: caught out again. *Tobacco Control* 2002;11:9).

Now comes news from Canada, where several years ago, Airspace Action on Smoking and Health, faced with a major Benson & Hedges promotion in Vancouver every summer, fought back with, among other things, a crafty website. The group found they could set up a site with the address <http://benensonandhedges.org/>. Thanks to subsequent tobacco advertising restrictions in Canada, the notorious Benson & Hedges (B&H) Symphony of Fire promotion is now a thing of the past, though it still receives an average of 15 “hits” per day.

However, while benensonandhedges.org is no longer useful to Airspace, the group has realised that there may be other places in the world where Benson & Hedges cigarettes are still heavily promoted, such as by cricket and other sporting events, so it is asking colleagues around the world to suggest deserving organisations. The domain was about to expire, and understandably, its current sponsors were reluctant to see any companies that promote B&H cigarettes having the chance to claim it for themselves.

New Zealand: butt bids

A cigarette butt must be one of the more bizarre items to be auctioned on an